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Is the New Building Code Worth Amending?

The Mayor's veto power is defined in Section 40 of the Charter, which reads in part:

"In case an ordinance or resolution shall embrace more than one distinct subject the Mayor may approve the provision relating to one or more subjects and disapprove the others. In such case those he shall approve shall become effective and those he shall not approve shall be reconsidered by the Board of Aldermen."

It has been suggested that the Mayor might exercise the discretion conferred upon him by the Charter to accept the bulk of the new building code while returning to the Board of Aldermen the provisions relating to the administrative authority of the Superintendent of Buildings, to cinders, concrete, and to Rosendale or natural cement.

This proceeding would be justified only on the assumption that apart from the provisions just mentioned the code is a desirable measure, possessing substantial and positive merits. Such merits, however, are wanting. The code does not attempt to solve any one of the larger and really important problems connected with building construction. If it does not remove the conflagration hazard in the congested districts, does not materially reduce the ordinary fire risk in the suburban areas, and virtually leaves the question of sanitation untouched.

The code now proposed is essentially a makeshift. Meanwhile it disturbs practically every section of the existing law and modifies at innumerable points the cost of non-fireproof as well as fireproof construction. Until it has been in operation long enough to develop a generally accepted schedule of construction costs for typical buildings lenders will hesitate to advance money on projected structural enterprises.

It seems hardly worth while to check the investment of capital in building operations and to throw labor out of employment for the sake of enacting a code which even as a temporary measure is of doubtful value.

Municipal Liability for Automobile Accidents.

In April last a fatal automobile accident occurred on a public road near Woodruff's Corners in Ontario county. The motor car turned turtle and one of its passengers was killed and another severely injured. The place of disaster is in the township of Farmington, and the representatives of the person who was killed have now brought a suit against the town to recover damages for negligently causing his death on the ground that the automobile was overturned by reason of the bad condition of the highway at the point of accident and the failure of the town authorities to guard it properly.

The litigation will raise some interesting and important questions in regard to the duties of rural townships to maintain their highways in a safe condition for the passage of automobiles.

As to the obligation of highway officers to exercise reasonable care to keep the public roads under their charge safe and suitable for horse drawn vehicles there can be no doubt. Such vehicles, however, do not move along the highway at a speed of 60, 30 or even 20 miles an hour, and consequently nobody formerly thought of such a thing as keeping the roads safe for carriages propelled as fast as a railway express train. A road which was perfectly safe for a team driven at a smart trot might be a path of great peril for a motor car moving at what would be deemed a moderate speed in an automobile. The introduction of motor vehicles has thus increased the burden which rests upon those charged with the safe maintenance of the highways, for although the rule of law remains the same—that is, that the roads must be kept reasonably safe for ordinary use—the fact that the employment of automobiles thereon has now become an ordinary use recognized by law calls upon the highway officials to maintain the roads in a reasonably safe condition for the passage of motor vehicles as well as vehicles drawn by horses.

In a case arising out of an automobile accident in this city the Court of Appeals has recently held that "while a municipal corporation is not an insurer of travelers using its streets and owes no special duty to those riding in automobiles, it is at all times bound to use due care to keep its public and much used streets safe and free from dangerous defects, and such streets may be as freely used by those who ride in automobiles as by pedestrians or other travelers." It is plain that travelers in motor vehicles are entitled to have the public roads kept as safe as are the roads to be kept for travelers in horse drawn vehicles, but they are entitled to demand greater safeguards than were necessary before the advent of the automobile.

It may well be urged that in every locality where the use of motor vehicles

is allowed the roads ought to be kept reasonably safe for their use. This use, however, should be that which the law permits and within the statutory speed limit. When the occupants of an automobile are running it at a rate forbidden by law they should not be entitled to complain of the city or town authorities because they have not provided a road safe enough to enable them to violate the law with impunity.

Mr. Heney's Fees.

In a pamphlet printed in San Francisco attacking the conduct of FRANCIS J. HENEY, the prosecutor of the San Francisco graft cases, PATRICK CALHOUN, one of the citizens against whom serious accusations were made by Mr. HENEY, asks over his signature these questions:

"Was Mr. FRANCIS J. HENEY paid the sum of \$17,500 during the past three years for the nominal services rendered the Federal Government during that period, or was he in fact paid for carrying on the graft prosecution in San Francisco and the true reason for the payments covered up by charging them to the alleged services rendered the Federal Government?"

"Can any man holding the lucrative office of Special Assistant to the Attorney General of the United States, the duties of which he has sworn to faithfully perform, fail, become, with the knowledge, consent or direction of the President of the United States and in violation of the Constitution of the State of California, nominally an Assistant District Attorney of the City and County of San Francisco, and while so nominally clothed with a State office invade the law guarded room of the Grand Jury and properly procure the legal indictment of any man? If so the Attorney General of the United States can himself, under the direction of the President, properly accept an office under any one of the States of the Union, and with the weight and prestige of the Federal Government behind him procure indictments against citizens of that State."

"Can a group of private citizens conspiring together procure from the President the loan of a Special Assistant to the Attorney General of the United States, and while the Federal Government is paying him sums aggregating \$17,500 secure his appointment as an Assistant District Attorney of the City and County of San Francisco and pay him large sums of money in addition to his salary and in addition to what he receives from the Federal Government, to obtain indictments against men selected by themselves?"

"Mr. CALHOUN's questions in one form or another have been asked many times, but they were regarded by many persons as the outgivings of an angry and vengeful man, and it was not until Monday, July 19, that they became matters of serious national importance. Then their substance became the subject of debate in the House of Representatives while the House bill making appropriations for the year ended June 30, 1909, was under discussion. This bill carries \$27,000 for the payment of assistants to the Attorney General 'to aid in special cases.' Mr. COX of Indiana brought the question up by asking 'whether or not the Attorney General's department makes a practice of employing District Attorneys of the United States to go out of their territory and prosecute other cases while still drawing a salary from the Government? Is any part of this deficiency brought about by reason of the fact that the Attorney General has sent United States District Attorneys to other States and Territories to conduct prosecutions?' To this Mr. TAWNEY answered no, and declared that 'that would be a positive violation of the law.' A moment later came this dialogue:

"Mr. COX of Indiana—Is any part of this deficiency brought about by amounts of money paid to Mr. HENEY of San Francisco?"

"Mr. TAWNEY—None whatever. I will say, for the information of the gentleman and the committee, that the payments made to Mr. HENEY of San Francisco were made out of appropriations made for years prior to the fiscal year 1909."

"Mr. COX of Indiana—So that there is no part of this deficiency—"

"Mr. TAWNEY—No part of this deficiency arises by reason of any payment made to Mr. HENEY."

Another subject received consideration, and then the payments to Mr. HENEY were again brought up:

"Mr. MURPHY—I should like to ask the gentleman from Minnesota a question. Did I understand him to say that none of this money was paid to FRANCIS J. HENEY?"

"Mr. TAWNEY—I say none of this deficiency is in any way due to payments heretofore made to Mr. HENEY on account of any service he may have rendered to the Government in the past."

"Mr. MURPHY—Can you tell us how much money has been paid to Mr. HENEY during the last year and what services he rendered to the Government for the money so paid him?"

"Mr. TAWNEY—Twenty-three thousand dollars, and no services whatever that year. [Laughter.] Once more other subjects occupied the attention of the House, but the compensation of Mr. HENEY was not forgotten as the debate progressed:

"Mr. SMITH—I would like to ask the gentleman a question. The gentleman has stated that \$22,000 was paid to one gentleman for no service rendered. I would like for the gentleman to explain to the House how it comes that these officers paying out our public funds pay them out for no services rendered?"

"Mr. TAWNEY—It is claimed that he was paid that sum for service rendered in previous years; that there was no service rendered in the fiscal year 1909. It was for services previously rendered."

"Mr. SMITH—Upon the authorization of Congress?"

"Mr. TAWNEY—Authorization of the Attorney General."

"Mr. FITZGERALD—He was paid the additional money after he had resigned and had been paid and received in full for his services?"

"Mr. TAWNEY—I am informed that is the fact, although I have not been able to verify it."

"Mr. SMITH—Cannot the gentleman so clothe the language of legislation in appropriation bills as to prevent a thing of that sort?"

"Mr. TAWNEY—Mr. HENEY was appointed Assistant Attorney General of the United States on the 27th of November, 1906. He served for some time as assistant to the Attorney General and then was appointed as an Assistant District Attorney for the District of Oregon. He was then appointed District Attorney for the District of Oregon, and served in that capacity a few months, and then resigned and was again appointed assistant to the Attorney General and appointed to prosecute certain cases extended from November 7, 1908, until 1909, since which time he has performed no active service for the Government, as is shown by the testimony of Mr. FIELD, the chief clerk of the Department of Justice, which is printed in the hearings. For that total service as assistant to the Attorney General, as assistant to the District Attorney, and as District Attorney he has received \$18,125. These are the facts disclosed by the testimony of the chief clerk of the Department of Justice before the gentleman who prepared this bill."

"It must be said that it appears from the testimony of Mr. FIELD that for the last three years

Mr. HENEY has not performed any active service in any of the cases in which he has been retained by the Government of the United States. It is also claimed that he gave a receipt in full shortly before the close of the last calendar year, and that subsequent to the giving of that receipt in full for all services he was paid, on the order of the then Attorney General, Mr. BOWAPART, \$30,000."

Then followed further debate. Mr. FITZGERALD proposing an amendment specifically excluding Mr. HENEY from receiving any part of the \$27,000 to be appropriated by the urgent deficiency bill. In support of this Mr. FITZGERALD said in part:

"This appropriation is a deficiency in the appropriation bill for the payment of assistants to the Attorney General. I do not propose to characterize the conduct or actions of Mr. FRANCIS J. HENEY; but when I find that in the course of four or five years, while engaged in important public business for other divisions of a State or municipal government, he received \$30,000 for alleged services to the Federal Government, it does seem to me that some check should be placed upon the possibility of paying him further for his supposed services, at least until some investigation can be made. I am further inclined to this belief, Mr. Chairman, for the following reasons: I find from an examination of what purports to be a compilation of the vouchers on file in the Department of Justice, that on January 1, 1907, Mr. HENEY filed his resignation with the Attorney General as a special assistant in the case of the United States against HENNER HANNAH. This was accepted on January 11. Some time later—February 19, 1908, I believe—he filed a claim for \$30,000 in full payment for services as Special Assistant to the Attorney General in the case of the United States against HENNER HANNAH. Yet in January, 1909, he was paid a further sum of \$30,000 for services in the HENNER HANNAH case. It may be that although he had resigned and his resignation had been accepted, although he had been paid in full for his services and at that time had received all told in the nature of \$60,000, he was still entitled to \$30,000 additional for his services. However, I should like to have that investigated."

There was further debate on the question. Mr. HENEY being warmly defended by Mr. MANN and Mr. HOBSON. In answer to a question from Mr. FITZGERALD in regard to twenty-eight cases in which Mr. HENEY is still apparently retained as Special Assistant to the Attorney General, this statement was forthcoming:

"Mr. TAWNEY—Mr. HENEY's several appointments continue until the termination of the suit or until he resigns or is asked to resign. In that connection I want to read a paragraph from a letter of the Attorney General:

"I have given general instructions and instructions in all the cases in which Mr. HENEY is retained to make a careful examination of the cases, and if they cannot be brought to trial within a reasonable time with any prospect of success, that the indictments be dismissed, and have caused some indictments to be dismissed under these instructions."

Mr. HENEY himself was quoted yesterday as saying that:

"I have not received a dollar in fees except for services rendered prior to the commencement of the San Francisco graft cases. The delay in payments to me by the United States Government was due to lack of funds, necessitating a special appropriation by Congress. A full itemized statement of all my accounts is in the hands of the United States Attorney General."

It will be seen that this agrees with the statement made by Mr. TAWNEY that the payment of \$23,000 "was for services previously rendered." Without an itemized account of Mr. HENEY's monetary transactions with the Department of Justice it is impossible to say that his declaration is correct, and obviously the merits of the San Francisco prosecutions are not involved in this entanglement. They do not rest on Mr. HENEY's financial transactions with the Federal Government. It is apparent, however, that this groping in the dark for facts, these delayed payments, all point to the high desirability of an investigation of the bookkeeping in the Department of Justice and a general ventilation of the employment of special assistants to the Attorney General, which seems to have attained during the Roosevelt administration a magnitude not suspected by the public.

An Illustrious Reputation.

In the Senate debate on the section of the tariff bill establishing a United States Court of Customs Appeals it was asserted that the Attorney General deemed the measure constitutional. Senator RAYNER of Maryland thereupon asked:

"Is the Attorney General infallible? I have seen Attorney General make the greatest mistakes on earth. I say as to one of the Attorneys General who preceded the present Attorney General that if you gave him a promissory note and a confession of judgment upon it he would lose the case. [Laughter.]"

"Mr. BAILEY—That is such an apt characterization of an Attorney General I once knew that I should like to have his name go along with the photograph."

Who was this Attorney General? Was he from Senator RAYNER's own State? Mr. RAYNER did not say that he immediately preceded Mr. WICKERHAM.

Future Inaugurations.

Washington has renewed the agitation for a change of inauguration day from March 4 to some time in April, if not later. Of course we know the reasons for this. The great throbbing masses of the people want to see their Presidents hauled down Pennsylvania avenue to the Capitol and then hauled back again, and the citizens of Washington are ready to erect sight seeing stands all along the route where visitors can get seats at from \$1 to \$5 each to witness the procession. But March 4 in Washington is not a safe day for pageantry. This year it was impossible. It is conceivable that the patriotic citizens lost money. So they want the date changed to some salubrious, *al fresco* month, in which they can invest with comparative composure.

We do not see how this consummation is to be achieved without a vast amount of trouble and concerted action all over the United States, and we fear this concerted action will prove difficult, since at least nine-tenths of the population do not care when inaugurations are celebrated and haven't the slightest idea of attending one in any event. This solicitude for the groaning millions touches us deeply, to be sure. A willingness to provide for them at 200 or 300 per cent. profit, to house the visiting organizations and to hold the ball in Government buildings is too beautiful

to witness without genuine emotion. We fear it cannot be arranged, however, unless the people at large can be induced to take more interest than at present they seem disposed to take.

The fact is that future inaugurations should be conducted by the Government alone. The escort to the Capitol should be purely military and of no great proportions. After that if committees of local real estate men, hotel keepers, retail merchants, etc., want to invite sightseers and marching clubs and military organizations to witness the pageant, and if need be supplement it, they should be left free to do so—under the usual police surveillance—but without assistance or complicity on the part of the Government. Certainly the public business should not be interrupted for days at a time to further the speculations of a few local operators.

Sheep Raising in Virginia.

It is beautiful to hear our Virginia friends talk about sheep raising. They can make that industry look like a relaxation. Everything favors it. The lush valleys, the swelling mountainsides, the long reaches of sumptuous pasturage, &c. Why should not Virginia become a great sheep raising State and the wool roll up into huge white masses under the manipulation of the shepherds? Why, indeed? There is only one thing to prevent, and that is a mere mangy yellow dog.

But let some incautious statesman say one word about the regulation of dogs, and Virginia, from Norfolk to Danville and from Winchester to tidewater, rises as one man in explosive protest. Every farmhouse becomes a bristling fortress. Every farmer a truculent, swashbuckling warrior. Sheep are all very well. Everybody loves to see the little lambs frisking about and the flocks grazing on a thousand hills. Everybody knows, moreover, that it means easy money for the grower, pianos and automobiles and fashion journals and all the rest of it for the family; but there is old Heck sprawling in the sun, snapping at the flies, chasing fleas up and down his leg, and distilling bad smells, for the delinquency of the children. Old Heck that runs under the kitchen stove and growls when a stranger enters the gate, and ranges far and wide by night in search of unresting prey. Kill Heck, or keep him tied up in the corn crib, or do anything else calculated to curb his instincts or bridle his activities? Not much. Rather than that, the deluge.

And this is one reason why Virginia has not become a great sheep raising State. There are other reasons, but they do not count.

Few friends of Dr. Eliot and fewer graduates of Harvard will in our judgment, quarrel with the following utterance of the profit takers of the "five foot" folly: "The publishers feel that the honorarium he has received has recompensed him poorly enough for the time and labor he is now spending." When to time and labor is added the dignity sacrificed—it is hard to conceive a honorarium even approximately adequate.

The truthful and painstaking chroniclers of the emergence from the Kings County Jail of a policeman who had completed a term of thirty days for contempt of court in refusing to obey a writ of habeas corpus record the fact that as he gazed admiringly at a large and handsome rubber plant a few doors from the prison entrance, he exclaimed:

"My, what an interesting interest one gets in Nature after a short term in jail!"

This touching observation reflects credit on the policeman's gentle and introspective mind; but he was not sent to jail to acquire an increased capacity for the enjoyment of Nature. The object of his punishment was to teach him, and every other policeman in the city, that the writs of the courts must be obeyed, even though obedience to them may interfere with those high things known as the "police regulations" and the "precedents established by the department."

On my theory of regulation, the accepted belief that the particles or atoms of matter are not in immediate contact with each other, but on the contrary each atom is isolated and in motion instead of fixed together with each other atom.

On my theory of regulation, a force is supplied from the beginning which reasonably accounts for separation of each atom of matter, and motion is also accounted for by repulsion, and in accordance with the law that a body in motion will pursue the line of least resistance we have simply to repeat that each atom from exerting the same repellent force, and we see that the motions of the atoms, among themselves and with the motion of the aggregate, are not in immediate contact with each other, but on the contrary each atom is isolated and in motion instead of fixed together with each other atom.

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DOUBLE TAXATION.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN.—Sir: Double or multiple taxation on one and the same income, thing, person or property is, undoubtedly, President Taft and his learned counsel, Mr. WICKERHAM, and Mr. Root, in the corporation tax scheme are discovering, one must think, that no national taxes on incomes, whether individual or corporate, can be laid without such possible double or multiple taxation. A person in New York, including a corporation, liable to a Federal tax on income is liable to a New York tax on the same income, and then to a tax on the franchise, business or property producing the income. That, to go no further, covers three taxes.

There are innumerable probable circumstances in which the pending corporation tax will, if it shall become law, inflict multiple taxes on the same person or thing.

The management of real estate is more and more each year placed in New York for one or another good reason in a corporate form. Trustees do it. Several inheritors of real estate do it to avoid the necessity of a partition. The real estate is visible and tangible. City tax assessors can and do value and tax it. Under the proposed corporation tax law a second tax must be paid to the Federal Government on the net income from the same real estate. And yet the Washington Government will have no more to do with the corporation or its franchise or acquiring the real estate than the Constantinople Government.

Such cases and hundreds of others show how inexpedient and unjust it will be for Congress, having so many available sources of taxation, to invade those which belong peculiarly to State taxes.

The prevailing cry now in Congress is that the north of a certain parallel of latitude and east of a certain longitudinal line do not tax rich men severely enough. Therefore the Federal tax gatherers must get hold of them and their property and there must be national income and inheritance taxes. Perhaps it may be that those condemned States do not tax at their full market value all the bonds and personal property having a situs therein of their inhabitants. But why not let those condemned States in their own way manage their own taxation affairs? Do the condemning States, each at its full fair value all the bonds and personal property of the plutocrats dwelling therein?

If the President and Congressmen can get from a tariff and the internal revenue the means to spend all the money required for national purposes, why vex themselves over State taxation and the escape in New York or elsewhere of the bonds of Mr. Carnegie or of any one else, unless it be that the purpose is to reduce the condemned States to the condition of mere provinces like the Philippines and Porto Rico or mere municipal corporations to be absorbed into Washington?

But such multiple taxes and regulations from Washington are not after all as serious in a moral aspect as the effort now made in Washington to circumvent or evade the Constitution in laying taxes. It will not be surprising, after men and women see what goes on at both ends of Pennsylvania avenue to get around the Constitution in the laying of taxes, that those men and women endeavor by sophistry or subterfuge to escape payment of those taxes.

NEW YORK, July 22.

NEWTON'S LAW REPEALED.

THE THEORY THAT THE FORCE OF ATOMS IS REPULSION PROPOSED AND DEFENDED.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN.—Sir: Is Newton's law of gravitation erroneous? I claim that its converse is true; that is, that every particle of matter instead of attracting repels every other particle of matter.

If Newton's theory be correct, then all matter should come together, and to avoid this conclusion we are referred to centrifugal force, which essentially depends upon motion and the tendency of moving matter to travel in a line produced by force.

If the fundamental law of matter be attraction it is not apparent why it should produce a force against itself, i. e., tending to separate those particles of any aggregation thereof.

If, on the contrary, we assume that each atom or particle of matter repels each and every other atom, then we start with a repulsion in consistent with the accepted belief that the particles or atoms of matter are not in immediate contact with each other, but on the contrary each atom is isolated and in motion instead of fixed together with each other atom.

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